

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A transport platform comprising:
a platform; and
adjustable length pillars provided either side and at both ends of the platform, the adjustable length pillars each having an upper cross-member interconnecting the upper ends thereof.
2. A transport platform as set forth in claim 1, wherein the platform is provided with cross-members which are connected with the platform and which extend parallel with the upper cross-members.
3. A transport platform as set forth in claim 2, wherein the upper and lower cross-members are provided with openings by which the upper and lower cross-members are engageable with structural members adapted to hold the platform in a predetermined position during transit.
4. A transport platform as set forth in claim 3, wherein the structural members comprise connection rails used to the transport platform to one or more adjacent containers.
5. A transport platform as set forth in claim 3, wherein the structural members comprise vertically extending guide members which are fixed to container ship bulkheads.
6. A transport platform as set forth in claim 5, wherein the openings in the upper and lower cross members comprise spaced vertically extending slots which are adapted to engage the vertically extending guide members.
7. A transport platform as set forth in claim 3, wherein the openings in the upper and lower cross members comprise openings formed in twist lock castings which are connected with the upper and lower cross members to allow for twist lock devices to interconnect the upper and lower cross members with the connection rails.

8. A transport platform as set forth in claim 3, wherein the upper and lower cross members are adjustably connected to a frame of the platform so as to be laterally adjustable within a predetermined limit with respect to the frame of the platform.
9. A transport platform as set forth in claim 4, wherein the connection rails engage the containers in a side-by-side configuration.
10. A transport platform as set forth in claim 4, wherein the upper and lower cross-members are provided with apertures which are so sized and located as allow releasable interconnection with the connection rails.
11. A transport platform as set forth in claim 1, wherein the platform is flat and adapted to have vehicles and other cargo including boats, buses etc., which are not suited for disposition in conventional containers, secured thereon.
12. A transport platform as set forth in claim 1, wherein the adjustable length pillars each comprise a base member rigidly connected with the platform and a telescopic member which is slidably disposed with the base member.
13. A transport platform as set forth in claim 12, wherein the upper cross-members interconnect upper ends of a pair of telescopic members.
14. A transport platform as set forth in claim 12, wherein the adjustable length pillars each further comprise a locking device which selectively locks the telescopic member in one of a plurality of positions relative to the base member.
15. A transport platform as set forth in claim 14, wherein each locking device comprises a locking pin which is disposed through apertures which are formed in the telescopic member and the base member of the adjustable length pillars.

16. A transport platform as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a cargo connection device which is provided on the platform and adapted to facilitate connection of cargo to the platform.
17. A transport platform as set forth in 16, wherein the cargo connection device is movable and selectively positionable on the platform.
18. A transport platform arrangement comprising:
 - a transport platform comprising:
 - a platform; and
 - pillars provided on either side and at both ends of the platform, the adjustable length pillars each having an upper cross-member interconnecting the upper ends thereof;
 - the transport platform arrangement further comprising first connection rails which are disposed over and connectable to the upper cross-members, the first connection rails being connectable to at least one container which is disposed adjacent the transport platform.
19. A transport platform arrangement as set forth in claim 18, wherein the platform further comprises lower cross-members fixed thereto, the lower cross-members being parallel to the upper cross-members, and wherein the transport platform further comprises first connection devices which interconnect the first connection rails to the upper cross-members and to an upper side of the at least one adjacent container.
20. A transport platform arrangement as set forth in claim 19, further comprising second connection rails which are disposed under the lower cross-members and interconnected thereto by second connection devices which connect the second connection rails to lower sides of the at least one adjacent container.
21. A transport platform arrangement as set forth in claim 19, wherein the first and second connection devices comprise twist lock devices.

22. A transport platform comprising:
 - a platform having first and second end members in which spaced vertically extending first slots are formed, the first slots being adapted to receive one of a plurality of vertically extending guide members that are provided on bulkheads of a container ship hold;
 - first and second sets of vertically extending pillars which are respectively provided at first and second ends of the platform; and
 - first and second cross members respectively interconnecting the upper ends of the first and second sets of pillars, the first and second cross members each having spaced vertically extending second slots that are aligned with the vertically extending first slots and which are adapted to receive the vertically extending guide members which are formed on the bulkheads of the container ship hold.
23. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the first and second end members and the first and second cross members are adjustably connected to the platform so as to allow a position of first and second end members and the first and second cross members to be laterally adjustable with respect to the platform.
24. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the platform is wider than a distance between adjacent vertically extending guide members.
25. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the first and second slots are respectively spaced in a predetermined relationship with a width of the platform and a distance between the vertically extending guide members which are disposed on the bulkheads.
26. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the first and second slots are spaced so that a number of platforms can be disposed side-by-side across the bulkhead of the container ship hold in manner wherein the number of spaces between the guide members is different from the number of platforms.

27. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the pillars are telescopic and selectively adjustable in length.
28. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the pillars comprise upper and lower halves, wherein the upper halves are slidable in the corresponding lower halves, and wherein locking arrangements are provided with each of the pillars for selectively locking the upper half in a selected positions relative to the lower half.
29. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the pillars are each pivotally supported on the platform in a manner which allows each pillar to be pivoted to a position wherein each pillar is essentially parallel to a deck of the platform.
30. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the pillars are provided with pillar projections which extend toward the ends of the platforms and which have slots formed therein, the slots in the pillar projections having essentially the same width and depth as the slots in the end member and which are aligned with one of the slots in the end members
31. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, further comprising brace members which interconnect portions of the pillars with a portion of the platform.
32. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, wherein the first and second end members and the first and second cross members each have an apertured casting at each end, and wherein the castings are adapted to receive connection members and to enable the first and second end members and the first and second cross members to be detachably connected to elongate connection rails which are used to interconnect the transport platform with an adjacent structure.

33. A transport platform as set forth in claim 32, wherein the connection members comprise twist lock devices.
34. A transport platform as set forth in claim 22, further comprising a deck which is disposed on an upper side of the platform to support cargo which is disposed therein.
35. A method of disposing transport platforms below deck in a hold of a container ship wherein the fore and aft bulkheads of the hold are provided with vertically extending guide members, comprising:

selectively disposing the transport platform in the hold so that one of the vertically extending guide members is slidably engaged in one of a plurality of spaced vertically extending first slots formed in an end member provided at each end of the platform, to prevent movement of the platform relative to the hold of the container ship.
36. A method as set forth in claim 35, further comprising:

holding the platform in a predetermined position within the hold using a plurality of spaced vertically extending second slots wherein the vertically extending second slots are formed in a cross member which interconnects the upper ends of pillars that extend up from the platform proximate the ends of the platform, and wherein the vertically extending second slots are respectively aligned with the vertically extending first slots formed in the end members at each end of the platform.
37. A method as set forth in claim 36, further comprising:

interconnecting transport platforms which are one of a) disposed side-by-side and b) disposed beside a container, using elongate connection rails which are disposed over the cross members of the platforms; and

interconnecting the cross members with the elongate connection rails using twist lock devices.

38. A method of disposing transport platforms in a hold of a container ship wherein the hold has fore and aft bulkheads which are each provided with a plurality of spaced vertically extending guide members between which cell guides are defined, comprising:

providing spaced vertically extending slots in each end of each transport platform wherein the plurality of spaced vertically extending slots are spaced in accordance with a predetermined relationship between a width of each transport platform and a distance between the spaced vertically extending guide members which define the cell guides, and wherein each slot is dimensioned to receive a guide member therein; and

disposing the platforms in the hold in a side-by-side relationship so that a number of the platforms and a number of cell guides which are occupied by the platforms are different.

39. A method as set forth in claim 38, further comprising adjustably connecting end members in which the vertically extending slots are formed to the transport platform and allowing the end members to be laterally adjustable with respect to the platform.

40. A method as set forth in claim 39, further comprising:

providing telescopic masts on the platform;

interconnecting the upper ends of the masts with upper cross members that each have portions in which vertically extending slots, which correspond to the vertically extending slots formed in the end members, are formed; and

connecting the portions of the upper cross members in which the vertically extending slots are formed so as to be adjustable with respect to the remainder of the upper cross members so that portions of the upper cross members in which the vertically extending slots are formed are laterally adjustable with respect to the remainder of the upper cross members.